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THE AGE AND AUTHORSHIP OF ECCLESIASTES.

IN my former paper on Ecclesiastes I attempted to analyse the contents of the book; I traced its plan, and showed that there is unity and continuity in it. Whenever the name of the author had to be mentioned, the original term Koheleth was employed without any explanatory addition. It is now my purpose to investigate who Koheleth was, and when he lived.

To some it may appear strange to find a question raised which seems to have been answered more than two thousand years ago, in the heading of the book, "Words of Koheleth, son of David, king in Jerusalem," *i.e.*, of King Solomon. Even if it were true that the heading is later than the book itself, and is an addition made by a later hand, it would, nevertheless, have to be accepted as a very old document, and its evidence could not be rejected without a demonstrative proof of its worthlessness. Maimonides in his *Guide* (I. li.), says: "There are truths which are manifest and obvious; some of these are innate notions, or are based on direct observation; such truths would, in fact, require no further proof, if man's thoughts had not been misled. False notions, however, are spread by persons that labour under an error, or have some particular end in view, and thus theories are set up contrary to the real nature of things. Scientific men are then compelled to demonstrate truths which are self-evident, or to disprove the existence of things which only exist in man's imagination." The trustworthiness of our witness has been impugned, and a closer examination of his evidence, as well as of the arguments of his objectors, has thus become necessary.

One of these objectors suggests that the phrase "son of David" has its source in the erroneous judgment of those who added the heading, since the phrase is not found in the book itself. But he fails to show the necessity for the appearance of the words "son of David" in any passage of the book. It was not without purpose that the author, in i. 12, says even with a certain amount of emphasis, "I, Koheleth,

have become king over Israel in Jerusalem." He lays stress on the fact that he was king over the whole of Israel, with his residence in Jerusalem, the capital of the undivided nation, untroubled by any such war or rebellion as had disturbed David's reign. By this introduction he intended to show that he had the leisure and the means required for the task he had proposed to himself. The addition of the phrase "son of David" would have been superfluous.

Another argument against the identity of Koheleth and Solomon is based on the use of the Hebrew "*ben*" in the general sense of "descendant," just as *abh* or *abhi* has in many passages of the Bible the meaning "forefather" or "founder" of a family or tribe. I do not deny this fact. We call ourselves בני ישראל, "children of Israel," and speak in our prayers of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as אבותינו, "our fathers," and Messiah, for whose coming we sincerely hope and earnestly pray, is בן דוד and צמח דוד. We may go even further, and take בן דוד as a collective term, including all the kings of Judah, and explain "words of Koheleth" to mean "words spoken by an imaginary representative of the kings of Judah," after the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. I hold, however, that of all possible meanings of the term "son of David," in the heading of the book, the literal one, son of David, that is, Solomon, is most acceptable.

But before giving positive proofs for this assertion, we will first examine the arguments of those who reject the identity of Koheleth and Solomon.

1. Koheleth says (i. 16), "Behold I have gathered wisdom more than all that were before me over Jerusalem;" and again (ii. 9), "I have collected treasures more than all that were before me in Jerusalem." If Koheleth were identical with King Solomon, it is argued, he would not have uttered these words, since there was only one Israelitish king in Jerusalem before Solomon.

I have already stated in my first paper that Ecclesiastes was not exclusively addressed to Israelites, but to a mixed audience of kings and princes that came from all countries to hear the king's wisdom. Jerusalem was an ancient town, probably the Shalem of Malchi-zedek. It is to the numerous wise and mighty princes that ruled in Jerusalem from the days of Malchi-zedek that Solomon refers in the words "more than all that have been before me in Jerusalem."

2. It is further argued that King Solomon could not have said הייתי מלך as Koheleth says, i. 12; and that the author betrays by this phrase that he merely introduces a king of

the past as speaking. The use of the past tense *הייתי* is probably also the origin of the well-known legend found in Midrash and Targum that Solomon was *הדיוט מלך והדיוט* "crownless, crowned, and again crownless," and *מלך הדיוט ומלך* "a king, deposed and reinstated." According to the literal interpretation, the past tense is simply used because the speaker refers in this and the succeeding verses to what has happened in past years. We find the same word *הייתי* in the same sense (Prov. iv. 3), "I was a son to my father, and he taught me." The past tense does not imply that he ever ceased to be a son to his father. So, also, in Koheleth, the phrase "I was king" does not imply that he was not king at the time when he said this. But the verb *היה* has also the meaning "to become," and the meaning of the passage is this: When I became king over Israel in Jerusalem I devoted myself to investigating the nature and value of man's actions.

3. Koheleth says, ii. 18: "I hated all my labour which I took under the sun; because that I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me." Koheleth speaks here, the critic says, like one that has no children; King Solomon had children, consequently Koheleth and King Solomon are two different persons. The critic, however, ignores two things; first, that the term *אדם* "man" does not *exclude* the son of the king; secondly, that Solomon was distinctly told by God (1 Kings xi. 11), "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee and give it to thy servant."

4. Some find it impossible that King Solomon should denounce idleness and feasting in the way that Koheleth does, x. 16, *sqq.* Solomon may have feasted and indulged in pleasures, but he was by no means idle nor neglectful of his duties towards his country. Besides, it is inherent in human nature that we are far more inclined to criticise others than ourselves.

5. Another argument against the identity of Koheleth and Solomon is the following:—Oppression, violence and misery are depicted in the beginning of chapter iv. as existing in the time of Koheleth. This does not seem to harmonise with the peaceful reign of Solomon. But the oppressions mentioned here are wrongly supposed by the objector to have been caused by a cruel conqueror in Jerusalem and in the land of Israel. There is no support for this assumption in the text. The crime and misery of oppression did, if not flourish, certainly exist even in the age of Solomon (comp. v. 7), and if there was not much oppression in Palestine we must remember that Koheleth in ch. iv. treats of "oppressions that

are done under the sun," without any special reference to Palestine or Israelites. But certain kinds of oppression exist everywhere, even in times of peace; one class is, or believes itself to be, oppressed by another, one individual by another, the weak by the powerful, the simple by the cunning. Cries of the oppressed have been heard and are being heard, even in our age, in the most civilised countries, and were probably heard also in the dominions of king Solomon. Koheleth noticed cases in which neither the tears of the oppressed nor the consequent additional violence of the oppressor created any sympathy for the sufferers. The source of this evil is not foreign occupation, but the race for pleasure and wealth. The author says distinctly, in the passage referred to, "I saw that all labour and skilful work were but envy of one toward the other." "If thou seest oppression of the poor and violation of justice and righteousness in the city, be not surprised at it. For over the high there is still a higher watchman, and again higher ones over these" (v. 7), so that even among those that have to watch over the acts and the conduct of others, there is the same inducement as among ordinary people to join in the common race for wealth and power. These cases are, besides, described only as possible, as a contingency, and not as of frequent occurrence.

It may, nevertheless, appear strange that Solomon, a wise and just king, endowed, as it seems, with absolute power, should have suffered any sort of injustice to continue in his dominions, and yet have complained of it "as the evil deed that is done under the sun." In reality it is not strange; the passage simply contains the king's confession of his weakness, of human imperfection, like that described in the first three chapters. He, the wise and powerful ruler, had been unable to solve the social problem that still awaits its final solution; the problem how to remove all inequalities, and how to make everyone contented and happy.

6. Another argument is based on iv. 13, 14: "Better is a poor and wise child than that old and foolish king who did not know any more how to guard himself. For from the prison he came forth to rule; for also in his kingdom he became poor." According to Professor Graetz, King Herod is the foolish old king, and the wise and poor child is his son Alexander, who was imprisoned on a charge of high treason. If this be correct the book was not composed by King Solomon, but is the work of an author that wrote just at the time when Alexander was in prison. But Alexander never reigned; he was tried and executed. In order to uphold his theory Professor Graetz is obliged to have recourse to emenda-

tions, changing the past *נִפְּלָא* into the future *נִפְּלֵא*, and interpreting the verse thus: for he will—as it was then hoped—some day come forth from the prison and ascend the throne. Professor Graetz was further compelled to apply the first half of the verse to Alexander, the second to Herod, although the text does not indicate that two different persons are intended. Besides, Alexander scarcely deserves the attributes poor and wise; as the son of king Herod he was not poor, and, as to his wisdom, history has not preserved any instance of his wise doings or sayings. It is not necessary at all to think here of a particular child and a particular king. The author states, in general terms, that a poor, wise child is happier than a foolish old king, who isolates himself from his people and keeps himself like a prisoner surrounded by a guard; for even *במלכותו* “in his reign” *נולד רש* he has become poor, having neither power nor wisdom. The king is abandoned by his followers; the nation waits impatiently for the successor, who, like his predecessors, is at first greeted with joy, and disliked in the end. The use of the past tense in the original merely shows, that instances of this kind had occurred, and probably, also, in the time of Solomon, but it is not necessary to assume that one particular case was here referred to.

In like manner, commentators have gone too far in their endeavour to find historical allusions in other passages. The author, reflecting on the fact that the condition of a country varies according to the conduct of its rulers, exclaims (x. 16, 17), “Woe to the land whose king is a slave;” “Happy the land whose king is a free man.” Notwithstanding the general character of the passage, the inference has been drawn, by several commentators, that the author must have lived in a country whose king was a slave, and attempts have been made to trace the name of the king. No notice is taken of the fact that the author mentions in the same breath the happy land whose king is free, in which the author may well have lived, and which he may have praised as a model state in contrast to some neighbouring state ruled by a slave.

7. Koheleth contains, as critics assert, attacks upon the Essenes and their principles. For “He that feareth an oath” (ix. 2) must be an Essene who refused to swear the oath of allegiance to king Herod; and “He who knoweth not how to go to the city” (x. 15) is likewise a member of this sect, because the Essenes preferred to live in villages. “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (iv. 9-12). “Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of

the life of thy vanity" (ix. 9). These and similar passages have been interpreted as directed against the Essenes, who were in favour of celibacy. There are some who consider these maxims as directed against the school of Shammai, who is believed to have indulged in a pessimistic view of human life. In fact, however, the verses quoted, and similar ones, are far from betraying any acquaintance of the author with the rules of the Essenes or the teachings of the Shammaites. "He who feareth an oath" is as little a member of a certain sect as "the righteous," "the clean," and "he that sacrificeth," mentioned in the same verse. Neither is "he who knoweth not how to go to the city" necessarily an Essene; it must have been a peculiar age in which no one ever lost his way except the Essenes. On the contrary, villagers, as a rule, know the way to town far better than those who live in towns. Koheleth gives, in this passage, the characteristic distinction between a wise man and a fool; the latter "multiplieth words; yet man knoweth not what shall be; the labour of the fools wearieth him who doth not know the way to the city," and happens to ask a fool for directions.

As to the supposed protest of Koheleth against the pessimism of the Shammaites, we find no trace of it in the book. Koheleth repeatedly exhorts us to labour, to be happy with our labour, and to enjoy the fruit thereof. The numerous sayings of the Shammaites related in the Talmud contain nothing to the contrary. "Receive every man with a friendly, happy face," was the maxim of Shammai. When the Shammaites declared "It would have been better for man if he had not been created" (Babyl. Talm. Erubin 13 b), it must not be forgotten that the Hillelites, though reluctantly, agreed with them. Whatever may have been the force of this dictum, both were of opinion that "man, having been created, must be careful with regard to his actions" (Ibid.).

8. It has further been asked, why the name Koheleth is used instead of Solomon, if the two names are identical. Let us first investigate the meaning of the feminine noun Koheleth. It is evidently a participle Kal of the verb קהל, and means "one who assembles or collects"; in this very sense it is used in our book, vii. 27: "Behold, this have I found, saith she who collecteth one by one to find a result." The question naturally suggests itself, Who is she? Koheleth does not let us wait for the answer; in the verse which follows he tells us distinctly: "what my soul (נפשי) sought." It is the soul of the author that searches after truth, and that collects facts one by one, in order to arrive in the safest manner at a correct conclusion. The same rule that explains the contraction of

אנשי מלחמה into מלחמה (1 Kings v. 17), אנשי קריה into קריה (Isaiah xxv. 3), תפלה into תפלה (Psalm cix. 4), explains also the use of קהלת as an elliptical phrase for בעל קהלת. The soul of the author is originally the Koheleth which observes, collects, and arranges the single facts upon which the philosophical edifice is founded. This explains, also, the use of the feminine form "Koheleth." The name Agur (Proverbs xxx. 1) has the same meaning, the root אגר signifying "to collect." It is noteworthy that "the words of Agur" likewise declare the weakness of man and the insufficiency of human reason if unassisted by the All-wise and Almighty.

If Koheleth and Solomon are names of the same person, why was the name Solomon entirely withheld from the book? The reason may be this: whilst Solomon שלמה was the name of a king whose special mission it was to establish peace (שלום) and prosperity in his country, the king confesses here that, with all his wisdom and power, he could not fulfil his mission; that the bright sunshine of his reign and his prospect for the future had commenced to grow dim behind dark clouds that rose from all sides. It was no longer Solomon (שלמה) that spoke, but Koheleth, who had learnt by experience the vanity and frailty of human power and glory.

9. It has been further argued that Koheleth contains Greek philosophy, that the search after the *summum bonum* was borrowed from Greek thinkers. This is not true. The theme of the book engaged already the mind of King David, the father of Solomon, who gave expression to his thoughts on the vanity of man's life in the thirty-ninth Psalm. The subject was, therefore, not new to the author of Koheleth, and there was no necessity whatever to go abroad and import ideas on human life from Greece. Neither the method employed nor the result arrived at betrays any non-Jewish element.

10. Omitting other objections as of little importance, we proceed to the last and seemingly strongest argument, based on the style and diction of the book. Owing to the peculiar subject, and to the peculiar treatment of the subject, peculiar expressions had to be introduced, which do not occur, or rarely occur, in other books of the Bible. That a peculiar subject and a peculiar method demand peculiar expressions no one will venture to deny. The second half of chapter iii. of Isaiah, on the luxuries of Jewish ladies, contains expressions that do not occur in the other sixty-five chapters of the book. Compare the parable of the vineyard in chapter v., with the song on the vineyard, in chapter xxvii.

and you will hardly recognise the same authorship in both; or compare Psalms xviii., xix., xx., three Psalms all ascribed to David, and notice the great difference in their style and diction, owing to the different subjects that engaged the mind of the poet.

Ignoring this fact, critics have attempted, by means of such rare words, to fix the date of Ecclesiastes. Some of them trace the origin of these words to Babylonia, and assume that Koheleth could not have been written before the Jews came into contact with Babylonia in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. They entirely forget that there was a constant intercourse between the Israelites and their Eastern neighbours, the Aramaic tribes, from their earliest settlement in Palestine, an intercourse lively enough for the exchange of a few expressions. Others discover Persian elements, and similarity with the Book of Esther, and hold that Koheleth was written during the Persian rule in Palestine. Still others find Greek roots and constructions in Koheleth, and declare that the author must have lived in the time of Alexander the Great or his successors, when the Jews commenced to learn Greek language and literature. There is even a fourth view that considers the language of Koheleth as approaching the New-Hebrew of the Mishnah, and assumes that Koheleth was written in the time of the earlier Tanaim. Krochmal, in his *Moreh nebhuche ha-zeman*, treats these rare words as of Chaldean origin, and divides them into two classes. The first class consists of those which are entirely borrowed from the Chaldee; the second class comprehends those which are a mere imitation of Chaldee expressions. Instances of the first class are: פתגם, כשר, במל, רתקן; of the second, על דברת, כל עמא ש. On examining these terms, we find every one of them pure Hebrew. The circumstance that they occur also in Chaldee only proves that the two dialects Hebrew and Chaldee both had the same roots; we cannot expect to find in the Biblical literature all words that were in use among the Hebrews. Many of the words mentioned appear according to their meaning in Koheleth more original than the corresponding expressions in Chaldee. I will only cite one instance from each division: פתגם is used in Hebrew in a particular sense: decision, decree, equal to the post-Biblical גזירה, whilst in the Targumim it occurs in the general meaning, word. It is derived from a root פתג "to decree" with the archaic noun-ending ם, which is met with in some proper nouns, and in some adverbs, originally nouns, as יומם, חנם, מומם. In Hebrew the word fell out of use, in Chaldee it developed and received the more general sig-

nification of "word" or "speech." Of the second division, I mention **ש עמת כל**, which is believed to be an imitation of the Chaldee **כל קבל די**. The Hebrew, however, is more original; it has still the force of the emphatic **כל** "entirely," whilst in Chaldee the meaning of **כל** is quite indifferent. We have, besides, to oppose to this theory the following two arguments: First, if the rare expressions were not owing entirely to the peculiar subject and method of the book, but to the contact of the Jews with the Babylonians, why are the other books written in and after the exile free from these Chaldaisms? Secondly, why do we not find in Ecclesiastes any of the peculiar Chaldaic forms, as the genitive **די** or the so-called emphatic form ending in **לֵךְ**, the *aphel* or the *ithpeal*?

Two instances have been pointed out as of Persian origin, **פֶּרֶס**, "paradise," and **מְדִינָה** "the province." If *paradise* were of Persian origin, it would be very strange that the book of Esther should only know the **גַּת הַבִּירָה** and not the **פֶּרֶס**, which was known already to the author of the Song of Solomon. Nor is **מְדִינָה** of Persian origin. It occurs in the beginning of Lamentations. Besides, it seems that the term *medinah* is used neither in Koheleth nor in Lamentations in the sense of "province," but in the more original sense of "metropolis," the seat of government and justice. If the author, as is supposed by some commentators, had intended to depict Persian misrule, the **פְּחֹת**, **סְרִיסִים** and **אֲחֻשְׁדֵּרפָּנִים** would not have been absent.

As to the Greek element present in Koheleth, I admit that we meet in the book with phrases that remind us of Greek phrases used in the same sense, and with words that sound like certain Greek words. But there is nothing that could convince us that the Hebrew author has borrowed any of his ideas and expressions from the Greek. How misleading a similarity of sound in this respect may be inferred from the fact that of the Grecisms enumerated by one critic, fourteen are rejected by another who is likewise in favour of this theory. Those which are admitted and added by the latter are as untenable as the rest; e.g., the verb **רָאָה** "to see" has in Koheleth in a few passages the same meaning as **יָדַע** "to know." Now there is in Greek the same root for the two verbs *ἰδεῖν* "to see," and *εἰδέναι* "to know." It is, therefore, from the Greek that Koheleth learnt the use of **רָאָה** in the sense of **יָדַע**. Such is the conclusion, though this use of the verb "seeing" is met with almost in every language. Long before the Israelites came in contact with the Greeks they had two expressions for the interrogative "why," **מָדוּעַ** "what knowing," and **מָה רָאִיתָ** "what seeing." Another instance of the supposed

Grecisms is the following: the list of various kinds of luxury in which Koheleth indulged for experience's sake concludes with the phrase וְתַעֲנֹנֹת בְּנֵי הָאָדָם שְׂדֵה וְשֹׁדוֹת. *Shiddah* which sounds like the Latin *sedes*, Greek *σέδος*, has been explained to mean "sedan chair, carriage," an essential element in Greek and Roman luxury. But this is not sufficient reason why "carriages" should be singled out as the climax of "delights of the sons of man," and why the plural "delights" should be used. But שְׂדֵה has the appearance of a genuine Hebrew word, and in fact is pure Hebrew, derived from שָׁדַד "to be strong"; it means "multitude" or "host," like חֵיל "host," from חָוַל "to be strong." The phrase simply summarises the objects of pleasure, and is to be translated "and of the delights of the sons of man, a multitude and multitudes."

The noun פְּרוֹגִים, a Hebrew word, is held by some scholars to be of Greek origin, corresponding to *φρεγμα* or *ἐπιταγμα*. It is noteworthy that in the LXX. פְּרוֹגִים is rendered *νομος* and *αντιρρησις*, not *φθεγμα* or *ἐπιταγμα*. The similarity of sounds simply proves that a certain stem is found, like many others, both in the Semitic and the Aryan languages. The rest of the supposed Grecisms are likewise built up on extremely weak foundations, and to the scholar who, in defending this theory, has the boldness to exclaim "Nur Eigensinn will sie nicht anerkennen," I reply, in the words of a German critic of the last century, "Die Beispiele sind wirklich blendend, aber eine genauere Beleuchtung der ruhigen Prüfung scheinen sie nicht auszuhalten."

Equally untenable is the fourth theory, that the presence in Koheleth of words which are rare in other books of the Bible, or entirely absent from them, but partly found in post-Biblical Hebrew writings, proves that Koheleth was the last of the Biblical books, that its language is the transition to Mishnic and Rabbinical Hebrew, and that the book was written in the times of the earlier Tanaim. There is a far greater difference between the style of Koheleth and that of the earliest Rabbinical writings, as, *e.g.*, the first chapter of *Pirke Abhoth*, than there is between Koheleth and the *Pentateuch*. The forms peculiar to Rabbinic Hebrew, the forms of the verbal noun, *e.g.*, שְׁמִירָה or שְׁמִיר, are entirely absent from the book of Koheleth, which abounds in abstract and verbal nouns; so, also, the frequent use of the participle with the copula instead of the finite verb הָיָה אֹמֵר. On the other hand, expressions peculiar to Koheleth we do not meet with in early Rabbinical writings, *e.g.*, the verb עָנָה in the sense of עָנִי; שְׁחָרוֹת, עֲדָנָה, עֲדָן, מִסְכֵּן, פְּתָנָה, etc., etc

The words in question may therefore be considered as rare and archaic, perhaps of Aramaic origin, and substituted by the author for more common terms when the latter did not fully convey the notion which the author desired to express. In the course of time, through the renewed contact with the Chaldee, some of these expressions reappeared in the Mishnic Hebrew.

The conclusion thus arrived at is, that Koheleth does not contain any fact or circumstance that *necessarily* points to a period later than King Solomon. It is, however, *possible* that the ideas and arguments taught by King Solomon were handed down *vera voce* from generation to generation, and written down at a later period in the style and diction of that period. This theory is supported by a certain tradition in Talmud and Midrash, to the effect that "the men of Hezekiah," who were engaged with examining or writing down the Proverbs of Solomon (ch. xxv. 1) and Koheleth, could not come to a final decision with regard to the latter and the men of the Great Synagogue resumed the work, examined the book, and approved of its contents.

In addition to the above negative proofs, there are also some positive proofs for the identity of King Solomon and Koheleth, viz. :—

1. Koheleth is king over Israel in Jerusalem. The kings after Solomon reigned only over Judah, and not over Israel.

2. Koheleth speaks of his great wisdom as of an undisputed fact, and it is on this ground that he claims confidence and faith in the results of his investigations. None but King Solomon could speak in this way. He had prayed for wisdom, and God told him that his prayer for wisdom was granted. "Wisdom and knowledge shall be given unto thee" (2 Chron. i. 12), and "all Israel saw that divine wisdom was in his heart," and "people came from all countries to Solomon to hear his wisdom" (1 Kings x. 23). We find neither in the books of Kings nor in the Chronicles any other king of the house of David endowed with the attribute "wise;" even the more complete chronicles, to which reference is made in our books of Kings and Chronicles, appear to relate only of "the mighty deeds and the wars of the kings," and nothing of their wisdom.

3. "Koheleth built houses for his pleasure; planted vineyards, gathered riches and the peculiar treasure of kings and cities" (ii. 8). To which of the kings of Judah does this apply? "Rehoboam had war with Israel all his days" (1 Kings xiv. 30); Asa was obliged to exhaust not only the royal treasure, but also the treasure of the house of the Lord,

in order to bribe Hadad ben Tabrimon; Joshaphat, the ally of King Ahab, joined the latter in his unfortunate wars with Syria, and was also unsuccessful in his mercantile undertaking; Hezekiah sent the golden doors of the Temple as tribute to the Assyrian king; Uzziah was much engaged in building, but only in works of fortification and defence, not palaces for comfort and pleasure. None but King Solomon was enabled to spend thirteen years in building his house (1 Kings vii. 1), and to build "the house of the forest of Lebanon," and "his desire which he was pleased to do" (*Ibid.* ix. 1; 19).

4. Koheleth appears to indicate that it was towards the close of a long reign that he uttered these philosophical doctrines. He says, What can the ordinary man do, that cometh after the king, *i.e.*, after Koheleth, whom they have made or proclaimed (*sc.* king) long ago. Solomon reigned forty years.

5. We infer from the tone and character of the book that Koheleth himself had many disappointments, and had learnt by experience that all earthly successes were but vain and transient. It is true that disappointments were not the peculiar fortune of King Solomon; many other men, kings and commoners, have been disappointed in their hopes. But, in the case of King Solomon, the disappointment created a peculiar contrast between the bright beginning of his reign and the gloomy prospects which darkened his latter days. It was hoped that his reign would be an era of peace. Solomon, "peace," was his name, and it was his mission to establish peace. To this end David had advised him how to rid the country of the most troublesome and dangerous elements, Joab and Shimei. With all neighbouring states he was at peace. And yet, towards the end of his days, rebellion threatened within and war from without. Even his father-in-law, the king of Egypt, harboured and supported the enemies of Solomon. He was the wisest of kings, and yet he found that he had failed to secure peace and prosperity to his people; he had been called Yedidyah, "loved by God," and now he was told that God rejected him; all had rejoiced when he commenced to reign (1 Kings viii. 66), and now he was hated by many.

6. Koheleth speaks of scenes witnessed by himself, "when man had dominion over man to his own injury" (viii. 9); when the אדם, the ordinary man, who had no claim upon the throne, endeavoured to usurp the power of ruling over others. Such scenes were witnessed by Solomon in his earlier days, in the lifetime of David. He must have seen the rebellions of Absalom, Sheba ben Bichri, and Adonijah, and noticed the

crimes perpetrated on these occasions. It was indeed "to their own hurt" that these three attempted to obtain royal power: and it is to these rebels that the tenth verse of the eighth chapter most fitly applies: "I have seen wicked men buried, and them who acted thus—*i.e.*, wickedly, by seeking to obtain dominion over their fellow-men—descend from their might, and go away from the holy place, to be soon forgotten in the city."

There are numerous passages in the book of Koheleth that betray a near relationship with other Biblical books ascribed to King Solomon. We have seen that the fundamental idea of Ecclesiastes is the dependence of man's success on the will of God. In the book of Psalms there are two chapters superscribed *li-Sh'lomoh* "by Solomon," and one of these (ch. cxxvii. 1-2) proclaims the same principle: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain. It is in vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved in sleep." We do not expect to find in the love-songs of Shir ha-shirim, Song of Solomon, many points of comparison with Koheleth. It may, nevertheless, be interesting to notice that Koheleth, in describing the course of the wind (i. 6 and xi. 3), mentions only the north and the south winds; so also in Shir ha-shirim (iv. 16) the bride summons only the north wind and the south wind to diffuse the perfumes of the flowers in the garden on the arrival of her beloved. The Book of Proverbs, likewise ascribed to King Solomon, emphasizes the lesson of man's absolute dependence on the will of God in numerous sayings, of which I quote a few: (xvi. 1) "The preparations of the heart are made by man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord"; (9) "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps"; (33) "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord"; (xxi. 31) "The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord"; (xxix. 26) "Many seek the ruler's favour, but every man's judgment cometh from the Lord."

In both books, Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, we are told that the wicked cannot prosper. "To the sinner he gives travail," says Koheleth (ii. 26) "to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God," and in the Book of Proverbs we read "the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (xiii. 22). The doctrine that the obstinate sinner is sure to be overtaken by just punishment is taught by Koheleth and Solomon; this doctrine is by no means peculiar to them; we find it expressed or implied on every page of the Bible.

God is long-suffering, and the punishment is frequently put off for a long time, and Koheleth (viii. 11) declares that this delay of the just punishment tempts man to sin. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." This same view we find repeatedly expressed in the Book of Proverbs in the advice given to the parent not to spare the rod (xiii. 24); "Is foolishness bound in the heart of a child; the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (xxii. 15). Koheleth repeatedly gives utterance to his feeling of uneasiness when he desires to lift the veil that hides the future from him, and becomes aware of his short-sightedness: "Man doth not know that which will be:" similarly, we read in the Book of Proverbs (xxvii. 1), "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Since we are unable to know "what is good for man in this life" (Ecc. vi. 12), Koheleth advises us to entrust ourselves unconditionally to the Divine guidance, and to submit to the authority of the law (מצוה): "Whoso keepeth the commandment shall know no evil thing" (viii. 5). Solomon says, almost in the same words, "He who keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul" (xix. 16). Koheleth exhorts us to enjoy life, to be glad, and "to rejoice in our own works" (iii. 22). The same we are taught in the Book of Proverbs: "When heaviness is in the heart of man, let him subdue it; and a good word shall turn it into gladness" (xii. 25). We may pass over the agreement of both Ecclesiastes and Proverbs in praising industry, justice, and wisdom, in denouncing idleness, injustice and folly, in warning against rash vows, and in describing the sacrifices of the wicked as an abomination in the eye of the Lord. But it is noteworthy that both Koheleth and Solomon, in demonstrating that wisdom excels strength, employ the past tense—illustrate, as it were, the lesson by some past event. In Koheleth we read (ix. 14): "There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it and besieged it. . . . Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city." In Proverbs: "A wise man scaled the city of the mighty, and cast down the strength of confidence" (xxi. 22). As regards the belief in a future world, in the immortality of the soul, I have noticed in my first paper the sure signs of the author's conviction that man's existence does not, like that of the beast, end with the dissolution of the body; that man's life continues after death, though in another form. There are, in the Book of Proverbs, several sayings which imply the same belief: "Behold the righteous shall be recom-

pensed *on the earth*, much more the wicked and sinner" (xi. 31); that is, from the fact that the righteous are seen in distress, we have to infer that the wicked, though prosperous on earth, will not entirely escape punishment; they will suffer elsewhere. Again (xii. 28) "In the way of righteousness is life, and it is the pathway in which there is no death" but immortality. It deserves to be noted that, although fools of every description are met with everywhere, it was the special privilege of the wise King Solomon and the wise author Koheleth, to make the acquaintance of the well-nourished, thick-loined *Kesil*, that is unknown to all other Biblical authors. The tenth verse of chapter xii. runs as follows: Koheleth sought to find out acceptable words, and that which is written is upright, even words of truth." Similarly, we read in Proverbs xxii. 20, at the conclusion of one section of the Book of Proverbs, "Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth?" Lastly it may be noted that both books conclude with an exhortation to fear the Lord.

Having established the unity and authenticity of Koheleth, I proceed now briefly to investigate two important questions: 1. When was Koheleth received into the collection of Holy Scriptures? 2. When was the Canon of Holy Scriptures fixed? and by whom? As to the first question, we have various traditions. One Talmudical passage says: Hezekiah and his colleagues כהנא wrote, or added to the Holy Writings Isaiah, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes, (Baba-bathra 15a). A different tradition is given in Aboth di Rabbi Nathan (i. 1) to this effect: Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes, after having once been rejected as originating in human thought and not in divine inspiration, were taken into reconsideration by the men of Hezekiah, who did not rashly decide, but examined the books carefully, and ultimately the three books were received into the collection of Holy Writings, by the men of Hezekiah, or according to an other version of this same tradition, by the men of the Great Synagogue.

The second question, as to the fixing of the Canon, I fear, will never be answered with certainty. We have no record whatever of any decision in this matter. When Malachi, the last of the prophets, added his words to those of his predecessors, and no other prophet succeeded him, the Canon of the Prophets was *eo ipso* concluded. Those Holy Writings that had not been included in the collection of the prophets, viz., Psalms, Lamentations, Ruth, etc., formed a separate collection

which was then still left open for further additions; this collection was probably considered as closed when a long period had passed without the publication of any addition to the Holy Writings. The Syrian oppression and the Maccabean wars were perhaps the causes of that discontinuity. Ben Sira seems to have known already the Holy Scriptures as Pentateuch, Prophets and other writings (τα πατρια). Krochmal assumes that certain discussions reported in the Talmud about the relative sanctity of some of the Biblical books, implied the question concerning the canonicity of these books, and consequently would help us to determine the time of the fixing the canon. The following is the discussion referred to (Yadayim iii. 5): "Does the general rule *הספר משמא את הידים*, 'A holy book causes the hands that touch it to be unclean,' apply to Koheleth? The Shammaites say 'No,' the Hillelites say 'Yes.'" Many assume that this amounts to the same thing as saying that the Shammaites would not grant Koheleth a place among the Holy Writings, whilst the Hillelites admitted it into the Canon of the Bible. This is wrong. For first, in the above discussion, repeated frequently in the Talmud, it is not once said that Koheleth should be suppressed because it did not belong to the Holy Writings. Secondly, it is distinctly stated, that the cause of the above-mentioned law was this: people were accustomed to keep holy writings and holy food together, and thus the holy books were frequently damaged. The book Koheleth must therefore have been known as a *holy* book, when this question was raised. The Rabbis only discussed whether there was any necessity to impress on the minds of the people by some exceptional law, that Koheleth contained the wisdom of Solomon and not a divine revelation. From this point of view the Shammaites would in this case, as in most cases, be *לחומרא* "more stringent," although seemingly *לקולא* "less stringent." Thirdly, the Rabbis of the period of the Hillelites and Shammaites would not ignore the decision of the men of Hezekiah, or of the men of the Great Synagogue.

It has been contended by many commentators that the last verses of Koheleth formed the conclusion to the Biblical books, and contained the decision of the wise men who fixed the Canon. This theory is principally based on a Midrashic interpretation of verses 11 and 12, entirely disregarding the Massoretic accents. The literal rendering of the last verses in Koheleth is as follows:—

9. And furthermore, as Koheleth was wise, he further taught the people knowledge, and weighed and searched, and made many proverbs.

10. Koheleth sought to find acceptable words; and that which is written, is uprightness, words of truth,

11. Words of wise men, which are like the goads and like fixed stakes, that keep the flocks together, [and which] are given by one shepherd.

12. And more than these (words of the wise) my son, learn; the making of many books without end, and much reading, is weariness of flesh.

13. The end of the word, when all is heard, remains: Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole [duty] of man.

14. For every action will God bring to judgment, together with every hidden [thought], whether it be good or evil.

In verse 11 Koheleth declares that his words in addition to their being "words of truth" are "words of the wise," which he compares, as regards their twofold object, to the goads that drive the animal further, and to the stakes that keep the flock within certain bounds. Thus Koheleth gave in his book the impulse to search, to ask, to doubt; and exhorts his audience or readers to proceed on this path; but there must be a boundary even to this doubting and searching: making many books and reading much without end is only weariness of flesh, no real gain. There must be stakes *מסמרות נשועים בעלי אספות*, there must be a *סוף דבר*, an end and aim to the word: and that end is Fear God!

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